Teacher Imprisoned for Refusing to Use Student's "They/Them" Pronouns

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Enoch Burke is an Evangelical Christian and a teacher of German and history in Ireland. He has been imprisoned multiple times since late 2022 for breaching a High Court injunction that barred him from his place of work. The dispute originated when Burke objected on religious grounds to address a 'transitioning' student by a new name and the pronoun "*they*", arguing that complying with this request would violate his Christian beliefs and constitutional rights.

He has spent a total of 560 days in prison since then and racked up €225,000 in court fines. As of yesterday, he is back in Mountjoy prison *again.*

Who is Enoch Burke?

Enoch Burke was a teacher at Wilson's Hospital School in Co. Westmeath, Ireland. The school's board was granted injunctive relief, restraining him from attending the premises following his refusal to use a different name and pronouns for a transgender student. However, he has continued defying High Court orders banning him from the site premises, insisting he is back "*to do a day's work"*. Repeatedly, he has been returned to prison.

Almost a year on from our original reporting on this story, Enoch Burke was released from prison last week. On Wednesday 14 January, he was let out to prepare for a case against an appeals body due to review his dismissal from the school – a decision granted on the condition that he would not return to the premises. The *next day*, Burke turned up at the school. He did the same on Friday 16 January and again yesterday (Monday 19 January) before being arrested and returned to jail.

Back in Court Again

Mr Justice Brian Cregan instructed Enoch Burke be brought to court to "*give his version of events*". Speaking in the High Court yesterday, Mr Cregan ruled that Mr Burke had indeed trespassed on the grounds of the school on 15 and 16 January, in what he called a "*fragrant breach*" of a court order, adding, "*You have been dismissed. It is not your place of work. What part of that sentence do you not understand?*"

When Burke was released last week, Mr Cregan had said that he was let out for "*one reason and one reason only*" – to prepare for his case against the appeals body. Burke insisted he was going back to the school "*to do a day's work*", and following his arrest yesterday, said "*this is all about transgenderism*".

Burke Stubborn Against "Transgenderism"

Burke's immediate return to the school grounds directly violated the standing injunction. It was not done covertly or under any false premise – his actions were deliberate and open, consistent with his long-held view that the order itself should not be obeyed on the grounds that it violates his conscience.

The court, however, reiterates that the original reason for the order is no longer the issue, but rather that the "*lawful*" order is being repeatedly disobeyed.

Conscience vs Controlled Speech

Is Burke being punished for misconduct, or for declining to affirm something he does not believe in? Using a preferred name and pronouns is not a neutral administrative act, but in Burke's eyes, a statement about identity that carries ideological and metaphysical implications. For someone whose religious convictions directly contradict the "*modern*" framework, compliance goes far beyond mere courtesy.

To his supporters, Burke's injunction barring him from the school appears less like a proportionate response to a workplace dispute, and more as a mechanism to enforce ideological conformity by exclusion. If courts can compel or control individuals' speech to go against their own beliefs or remove them from public life entirely, then freedom of conscience becomes conditional rather than a fundamental principle of society.

Burke's Return to Work and Latest Appeal

On Thursday morning – less than 24 hours after being released from prison – he addressed journalists outside the school, stating: "*I'm coming here to do a day's work, that's what I've always done. I should never have been in prison in the first place, this is my workplace, this is where I teach*." He remained outside the school gates for the whole day in cold, wet conditions.

Before his release, Burke sought a temporary injunction against the Disciplinary Appeals Panel, which is reviewing his original dismissal. The judge, before ordering his release, said the papers Burke had prepared raised "*credible*" and "*substantive*" issues.

After having spent more than 550 days in prison across multiple stints, the High Court in Dublin was informed that the school may bring a fresh application to have Burke committed to prison again.

European Conservative concludes: "*The case highlights the extent to which extraordinary legal and administrative measures are being deployed not only in Ireland, but in other Western societies too, to enforce a woke agenda, ignoring religious beliefs and basic biological realities in the name of progressivism*".

Final Thought

The court's attempts to enforce the ruling have failed to achieve compliance, which raises the question of what purpose continuing his incarceration serves. Many support Burke's refusal to dilute his beliefs and forego constitutional rights, while others argue that allowing selective obedience to court orders undermines the rule of law itself. Should a modern democratic state be willing to imprison a citizen repeatedly for refusing to affirm an ideological position they believe to be false?

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I'm George Calder — a lifelong truth-seeker, data enthusiast, and unapologetic question-asker. I've spent the better part of two decades digging through documents, decoding statistics, and challenging narratives that don't hold up under scrutiny. My writing isn't about opinion — it's about evidence, logic, and clarity. If it can't be backed up, it doesn't belong in the story. Before joining Expose News, I worked in academic research and policy analysis, which taught me one thing: the truth is rarely loud, but it's always there — if you know where to look. I write because the public deserves more than headlines. You deserve context, transparency, and the freedom to think critically. Whether I'm unpacking a government report, analysing medical data, or exposing media bias, my goal is simple: cut through the noise and deliver the facts. When I'm not writing, you'll find me hiking, reading obscure history books, or experimenting with recipes that never quite turn out right.
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